

# VASTRA Tribune

Virginia State Therapeutic Recreation Association



ODU students social distancing while working on the newsletter.

## Welcome

Welcome to the third edition of the VASTRA Tribune! Within this newsletter you will read about **Old Dominion University's Therapeutic Recreation Program**, where students are contributing to the field through their service learning experiences. Additionally, you will hear from several experienced TR internship supervisors about their experiences with student interns. You will also read about the role of TR in Fall Prevention programs and their impact on evidence-based practice. Finally, this is a great way to connect and network with fellow colleagues around the state of Virginia. Please feel free to share your feedback on VASTRA's newsletter through various social media platforms. We are thrilled to continue the tradition of promoting the field of Therapeutic Recreation within Virginia.

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## How much experience do you like to see from a potential intern?

"It's not necessarily how much experience as it is the quality of experience. We really love to see experience across the board and not just one specific area. Having a student comfortable with people with disabilities (children, adult, seniors) in general is the most looked at trait for us because most everything else comes with that rapport that gets built initially."

- Tryphena Poulson CTRS at the Norfolk Therapeutic Recreation Center

## What are the most common reasons you wouldn't select a student for the internship?

"One of the top reasons we would not select someone for an internship would be their overall professional presentation and behavior. Communication skills are key when beginning to come into the professional world, even as a student intern. I pay close attention to the tone of written communication and content as well as timeliness of said interactions. Professional presentation is also a big factor for our internship program... during tours, interviews and the appearance of your documentation you provide. In the interview setting, verbal communication is very important, if you have knowledge in a certain area that we are discussing please share it! We want to see you confident in yourself and your skills as a young professional"

- Allyson Hagan CTRS at The Barry Robinson Center



## What are some of the qualities/characteristics you personally looked for in an agency when searching for your internship?

"I looked for an agency that was going to challenge me the most but that also had a long history of being around. The thing that I looked for the most was in the way my supervisor talked about the agency and how she truly believed in the mission and vision. I completed my internship in 2007 and my internship supervisor is still there and we still have a great relationship still. I continue to lean on her with questions and I am very happy with my choice."

- Kerrie Fisher CTRS at The Farley Center

## What are deciding factors for who to pick for your intern?

"We look for maturity, organizational skills, basic skills in writing, timeliness, creativity, ability to manage stress, knowledge of medical terminology and treatment techniques (group and individual), someone who is coachable, has confidence, but not cocky and is able to communicate with various types of people."

## What's impressive on a resume/application?

"Volunteer work with various types of diagnoses and age groups and someone who has initiated gathering work experience and leadership skills."

- Curtis Robb CTRS at Hunter Holmes McQuire VA Medical Center



# ODU TR SERVICE LEARNING



## MIGHTY MONARCHS YOUTH WHEELCHAIR SPORTS PROGRAM

*Mighty Monarchs is a community-based adapted sports program for youth with physical disabilities. Three years ago, faculty purchased 20 sport wheelchairs through a grant from the Danah & Christopher Reeve Foundation. The program is held on Saturday mornings in ODU's Student Recreation Center. The program provides opportunities for local children to participate in a wide variety of adapted sports. Recreational therapy students conduct assessments on the children and implement wheelchair sport activities.*

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS LITTLE FEET MEET

*This event is a partnership with Special Olympics Virginia, the Norfolk Public Schools, and ODU's RT program. Held in April, over 300 elementary school children with developmental disabilities come to ODU for a large Special Olympics event. Recreational therapy students plan, organize, and implement over 20 adapted sports stations.*



## GO BABY GO!

## SENIOR WELLNESS PROGRAM AT BETH SHOLOM VILLAGE

*Recreational Therapy students plan, implement, and evaluate senior wellness program at Beth Sholom Village in Virginia Beach to encourage regular physical activity in older adults residing in long term care facilities. During this community engaged intergenerational program, RT students facilitate 60 minute group based fitness sessions twice per week for six weeks using evidence based interventions focused on enhancing strength, balance, endurance, and flexibility in older adults. Students provide physical, cognitive, social, and emotional support as needed to participating residents while tracking participants' progress in multiple domains.*



*ODU Recreational Therapy students collaborate with ODU engineering students and Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics, a local facility for custom fabrication of orthotic and prosthetic devices, for GoBabyGo! RT and engineering students, with help of CPO staff, install adaptive switches, custom trunk support, and other accommodations to battery- powered ride on cars. Originally developed at the University of Delaware, this program provides children with mobility impairments the opportunity for independent movement and play through the use of these modified cars (University of Delaware, 2019)*



## ***ROLE OF TR IN FALL PREVENTION PROGRAMS***

Fall Prevention Programs are therapeutic programs specifically designed for older adults who are considered to be a fall risk. This program is important in the reduction of risks of falls through knowledge and awareness, as well as, maintaining an individual's physical functioning through recreational activities. Improving muscular strength, endurance, balance, and flexibility are key components that can reduce the risk of falling in individuals (Garcia et al., 2012). The field of Recreational Therapy takes this very seriously because professionals witness the risk of falls in clients through recreation and leisure services. According to the article by Skaiko, Burgess, and Loy titled *Assessing Balance and Fall Efficacy in Community-Dwelling Older Adults*, Therapeutic Tai Chi and an intervention called Master of Balance are both evidence-based approaches that are accepted by the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (2013). Based off the article titled *Using Tai Chi to Reduce Factors Among Older Adults: An Evaluation of a Community Based Implementation* by Gallant, Tartaglia, Susan Hardman, and Kara Burke, "Tai Chi is a Chinese martial-arts based exercise characterized by slow, fluid movements, and breathing awareness that leads to improved balance, strength, and flexibility" and it has been linked to a variety of health benefits (2019). Tai Chi helps the client to focus on their body awareness along with weight-shifting which is likely why it is shown to have a positive effect on balance and fear of falling.

The undergraduate students studying within the Recreational Therapy concentration at Old Dominion University implemented a Senior Wellness Program at Beth Sholom Village, an award-winning residential assisted living and skilled nursing facility in Virginia Beach, with the fall prevention programs mentioned in the previous paragraph as their foundation for their interventions. The program was designed using a mentor-mentee approach where students facilitated and supported their residents in recreational activities designed to enhance or maintain their endurance, balance, and flexibility, The RT students spent the final six weeks of their fall semester implementing sixty minute recreational therapy interventions twice per week. The implemented programs were selected by students after analyzing evidence-based practices regarding fall prevention in the long-term care setting.

***"the benefits are unparalleled compared to any other program"***

Throughout this program, the residents of Beth Sholom Village benefitted not only physically but simultaneously experienced decreased isolation, the formation of emotional bonds, and an increased participation in leisure pursuits. The RT students who participated in this program were able to gain experience in implementing recreational interventions, writing and tracking goals and objectives, and working with the older population. Joshua Bennett, the Recreational Therapy Director at Beth Sholom, stated that "the [Senior Wellness] program is invaluable to a facility such as [Beth Sholom]. All of these benefits are unparalleled compared to any other program that's currently out there for seniors. Falls are detrimental to seniors on multiple levels and can severely impact a person's life and overall functioning." This Senior Wellness Fall Prevention Program not only enhanced the overall quality of life of the residents who participated in it, but it also gave students the opportunity to gain new perspectives, experience, and knowledge that is beneficial to them as pre-professionals and ultimately, as people.



*(Right) Stock Photo courtesy of Dr.Fuzhong Li of the program Moving for Better Balance which uses Therapeutic Tai Chi elements to improve the balance, flexibility, and strength of older adults*

*(Left) Old Dominion University RT student Lora Clanton with resident participating in adapted bowling during the Fall 2019 Senior Wellness Program at Beth Sholom Village*



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## *GET CONNECTED*

### VASTRA



**Facebook: VASTRA**



**Twitter: VA\_RecTherapy**



**Instagram: va\_state\_tr**

### NCTRC



**Facebook: nctrcorg**

**Website: <https://www.nctrc.org>**



*You're Invited!*

# VASTRA Bi-Annual Workshop *"Surviving or Thriving"*

Eastern State Hospital  
4601 Ironbound Rd.  
Williamsburg, VA 23188

■ For more information visit [www.trvirginia.com](http://www.trvirginia.com)

*Are you surviving or thriving? Learning how to maintain a healthy balance of our own self-care while providing quality and therapeutic services to our consumers.*

This event has been postponed, keep an eye out for an email regarding a reschedule date.

